



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 5
77 WEST JACKSON BOULEVARD
CHICAGO, IL 60604-3590

EPA Region 5 Records Ctr.



200890

POSITION STATEMENT FOR THE PUBLIC POLICY FORUMS
KALAMAZOO RIVERFEST
OCTOBER 2, 2003

EPA assumed primary responsibility for the cleanup of the Kalamazoo River Superfund site in 2002. At that time, EPA explained that its cleanup approach would focus first on eliminating on-going sources of PCB (polychlorinated biphenyl) contamination, which include the exposed paper waste along the river banks, and then address in-stream sediments. The cleanup will begin upstream and work downstream on a reach-by-reach or dam-to-dam basis. We will address the Phase I portion of the river (Morrow Pond Dam to Lake Allegan) first and then the Phase II portion (Lake Allegan Dam to Lake Michigan).

Since 2002, EPA has been working on the Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study for the Plainwell and Otsego City impoundments. EPA wants to make the best possible decision on the cleanup of these impoundments. We hoped to announce our cleanup proposal this year. However, in August, we received preliminary information from the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) related to what might happen in the river if the three state-owned dams were removed. To get a better understanding of the preliminary USGS information, EPA, MDEQ, and the USGS made several more boat trips on the river, walked the impoundments, and held numerous meetings. From our extensive discussions, EPA now believes it is important to wait until the preliminary USGS study results are available before we announce our cleanup proposal for the impoundments. It is important to consider the results of the USGS study since both the community and the state have expressed an interest in having these dams removed.

EPA will have the preliminary results in November and will decide on a cleanup proposal after carefully considering the results. Our goal is to make sure that our proposed cleanup plan is viable and that our decision is scientifically and legally defensible. EPA will keep the public updated as to when we expect to announce our cleanup proposal for the impoundments. We will do this via fact sheets and postings to our Region 5 web site at:
www.epa.gov/region5/sites/kalproject

On a related note, EPA expects to receive \$6.2 million from the Plainwell Mill settlement agreement. This money can be used for future work at the Site. We also want to congratulate the Kalamazoo Watershed Council on receiving EPA's Technical Assistance Grant. This grant will allow the Watershed Council to provide further support to the public on the Kalamazoo River project.

Contacts: Shari Kolak
EPA Remedial Project Manager
(800) 621-8431 x66151
e-mail: kolak.shari@epa.gov

Don de Blasio
Community Involvement Coordinator
(800) 621-8431 Ext. 64360
e-mail: deblasio.don@epa.gov